A REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE BRITISH NATION.

Thursday, July 29. 1708.

I Cannot discourse with my mad Man, but he tells so many wicked unhappy Truths, that I am forc'd to lay him aside every now and then, for Fear of his Lunatick Excursions.

Mad Man. You may lay me aside as often as you please another Time, but I will not be laid aside just now, for the Case requires it, *and I will speak.*

Review. What is the mighty new Occasion you have offer'd? Pray, let's hear it.

M. Why truly, the Occasions are various, but chiefly upon the Occation of the late Victory in *Flanders*; without doubt it is a Victory, and a great Victory, but I find Abundance of People going mad about it, and when mad Men are talking, I am sure it is my Time to put in my Word, and I claim to be heard among the Crowd.

Rev. What can they be going mad about? Sure they must allow it to be a Victory, a *glorious Victory*; They must expose themselves that will dispute that; the Retreat of the *French*, the Number of Prisoners, the Standards and the Colours all acknowledge it; nay, the Duke. *De Vendosme* acknowledg'd it in his Retreat to the Canal of *Bruges*, and fortifying himself there, and innumerable Consequences more acknowledge it.

M. It's no matter for that, we have mad Folk among us upon this Head too—

Rev. What is it they would be at?

M. O Abundance of Things they would be at; they are leſſening the Victory, they ſay you boaſt of a kind of Victory, which you have not obtain'd; they ſay, it is true, that after an obſtinate and bloody Fight of 5 Hours, the Night parted the Armies, that you had ſome Advantage upon one Line of the Infantry, which occaſion'd your taking ſome more Priſoners than they. But that the *French*, who 'tis known had *no Deſign* to come to a deciſive Action, drew off in the Night, and making their Retreat in very good Order, have yet their Forces unbroken; that their Horſe are ſtill entire, being by your own Confeſſion not much engag'd, that they carry'd off all their Cannon and Baggage, *&c.* That where you attempted to break in upon their Horſe, you were beaten off, and that with conſiderable Loſs, *as in the Paper printed by Authority is acknowledg'd*, where the *Pruſſian Gens d' Arms* loſt half their Number, *that is*, were entirely ruin'd. That, *when preſuming your Victory greater than it was*, you ſent a Body of Horſe in Purſuit of the *French* towards *Ghent*, they were ſo well receiv'd by the *French* Grenadiers, who were poſted to bring up their Reer, (a certain Token of an orderly Retreat) that they were fain to go home again far otherwiſe than Conquerors—— *And the like.*

Rev. It is very hard, that among this Proteſtant pretending Nation there ſhould be ſtill found a Party, to whom a Victory over the *French* is a Misfortune; and it is very much our Diſaſter, that there are more than one or two Parties among us, of whom this is but too true; ſome in Pique at Perſons, ſome at Parties, ſome as it croſſes their riſing Deſigns, ſtands in the way of their new Projects; for my Part, I ſhall not run in upon Parties, or Perſons, but I crave leave to tell them all, *let it fall where it will*, it is an ill Token upon their Party, as well as upon their Perſons, that their Projects, and a Victory over the *French* ſhould in the leaſt claſh with one another. It is no Breach of Charity for me to ſay, that thoſe People who ſtrive to leſſen our Joy, *bear little ſhare in it*; that they who induſtriouſly ſtrive to make our Victories appear leſs than they are, deſire to have them be leſs than they are.

It is a certain Token of the Truth of our publick Accounts of the Victory, that wherever the Enemy had any Advantage, theſe Accounts own it, where we receiv'd any Loſs, they are particular in it. They are not afraid to ſay, the *French* fought obſtinately, that they were fain to fetch 18 Battalions from the Left to ſuccour the Right; that the Duke of *Marlborough* had his Hands ſo full, that he ſent earneſtly to the Left to have them employ the Enemy there to draw off their Hand —— That on the Right when Prince *Eugene* had made ſome Openings, and ſent in the Horſe, they were driven out again, that the next Day in purſuing the *French* they were repuls'd. It is plain, the Action is ſo clear, and the Victory ſo undiſputed, that we need no Arts to conceal any Part of it; that the *French* fought very deſperately, is acknowledg'd, and behav'd much better than at *Ramellies*. That their Horſe have not ſuffer'd much, that they are not entirely broke, *as at Ramellies*; all this is true, but that we have for all that obtain'd a great Victory, is as certain; that it has given us a Superiority in Forces, as well as in Courage, that the *French* are diminiſh'd at leaſt 20000 Men, ſlain, Priſoners and wounded; *this is true*, and the Conduct of the *French*, ſince the Battle plainly confeſſes it, and the Accounts given, make no more of it.

M. Why truly, our forward News-mongers with their Epithets of *Entire*, *Compleat*, *Glorious* and *Wonderful*, which they add to magnifie every Action, do us more Harm than Good, and give theſe Phlegmatick People Opportunity to leſſen things again as much as they can—But you ſee, the true Accounts are impartial, need no Gloſſes, nor make uſe of any, but ſet Matters in a true Light; we have as much Victory as they tell of, and they tell of as much as gives us ſufficient Cauſe for all the Joy and all the Triumphs we have made; and thoſe People that would have it be no Victory, becauſe there are any of the Enemy left, give us a ſhrewd Sign to gueſs, that they would be willing there ſhould be more of them left than there are——

Rev. It

Rev. It is very odd, and but a melancholly Reflection, that there should be any such Kind of People left among us in this Nation; pray, can you tell who they are, or what they are? Are they Protestants or Papists, Christians or *Turks*, or what Kind of unnatural Creatures are they? It would not be amiss to draw their Pictures a little, that the World might know them.

M. I shall make but a mad Picture Drawer, but their Actions paint them so exactly, that you need no more than put the Text upon them, *by their Works ye shall know them.* There are no less than four several Sorts of these People among us, who with much Diligence strive to lessen the Report of our Victory, and take from the Nation, if it were possible, the Foundation of their Joy, tho' I doubt not, but they shall all be disappointed; and Half of these, *to their Shame*, call themselves Protestants, *Britains*, and Friends to the Revolution, and talk loudly of our Managements of things at home and abroad —— But before I come to describe these Gentlemen, I must tell you of another Branch of the Discontent, which appears but too evident, *Viz.* That we have a Party who are worse pleased with the Victory, than they would otherwise be, because of the Persons who have been Instruments in obtaining it; this runs a greater Length than most People imagine, and will require some Kind of Scrutiny into Affairs, which I have not Room for now.

Rev. It was really none of the least Happinesses to the Duke in this Victory, that Prince *Eugene* was not joyn'd him, those People would then have said, that it was HE got the Victory, not the Duke of *Marlborough*.

M. Why he was joyn'd, and charg'd at the Head of the Right Wing of the Army.

Rev. Ay, ay, but his Army was not joyn'd; had his Army been joyn'd, they would have said, it was Prince *Eugene* got the Victory, and that the Duke of *Marlborough* durst not fight the *French*, till Prince *Eugene* came; that being joyn'd with a vast Superiority of Troops, the *French* were obliged to yield to Numbers, and a hundred Things they would have said to have lessen'd the Duke's Conduct.

M. Nay, they do that as it is, they tell you, Prince *Eugene's* Fortune carry'd the Day; that if he had not been there, it had not been fought, or had not been gain'd; but that the very Name of Prince *Eugene* struck a Terror into the *French* Army.

Rev. As to those *Forsune-mongers* I have nothing to say to them, they are worth no Body's Notice; it is long since, *among Christians*, that Chimera call'd *Fortune*, has dwindled quite away into the Substance PROVIDENCE, for which the Idolatry of Mankind in former Ages mistook it—And ever since that, the Title of particular Persons to Victory, has also effectually vanish'd. —We have also found for some Years, that the *French* are not to be frighted with Names, or with the Reputation of Persons, but they fight as heartily to day against him that beat them yesterday, as against another Man. It is Conduct, Number of Forces, Advantages of Ground, and the true Rules of War they act by, and which, *tho' we master them every day in the Practice*, we must own, all *Europe* has learnt from them; and without Compliment to our Enemies, I believe, I may be allow'd to say of them, they fight the best with the worst Troops of any Nation in the World, which is owing to their exact Conduct and Discipline, and to the Goodness and Number of Officers they employ.

M. Nay, I am clear in that too, that Names and Generals do nothing any farther than their Conduct excells.

Rev. Nor can they say, but that the whole Conduct of this Action, the prodigious March before it, the disappointing the *French* of the strong Camp at *Lessines*, and the surprizing them into a Battle, was wholly the Duke of *Marlborough's*, and let it make who it will uneasie, I cannot help it, Justice ought not to be deny'd, where Merit makes so fair a Demand, and especially where we are Gainers by that very Merit we would so gratefully conceal.

M. Ay, *you will say any thing* of this kind, *they say*; it's known, *they say*, that you will always cry up the Victor, the World has been expecting another Hymn to Victory from you upon the Occasion, and a new Court to the D. of *Marlborough*.

Rev. Long

Rev. Long they may expect it then, I assure them; *my Harps are long since hung on the Willows*, my Brains have done crowing; a banish'd Condition, a distracted, unsettled Circumstance, and a general War with the World, with the constant Attacks of private and publick Enemies and Misfortunes, for a Series of 16 Years in a State of Affliction, and yet without Prospect of Deliverance, might have b oke a stronger Genius than mine; and I am not at all asham'd to say, I am not qualify'd; and as for courting without Merit, I have so much abhorr'd it in others, that I shall not attempt it my self, and therefore if ye expect any thing of that Nature from me, Gentlemen Poets, you will be disappointed.

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